

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

HEDGEROW PLANTING

(FEET)
Code 422

DEFINITION

Establishing a living fence of shrubs or trees in, across, or around a field.

<http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/plants.html> and click on "Iowa Woodland Suitability Recommendations" or refer to "Woodland Suitability Guide at: <http://www.iowadnr.com/forestry/soils.htm>

PURPOSE

- Delineate field boundaries.
- Serve as fences.
- Provide wildlife food and cover.
- Provide screens or improve the landscape.

Planting rates will be adequate to accomplish the planned purpose.

Site preparation, establishment, planting dates, spacing, planting methods, and care in handling and planting of the plant material shall be in accordance with Tree/Shrub Establishment (612).

When planting for maximum fruit production, use the maximum spacing for full crown development. For screening or tight thicket cover, space the plants at the minimum distance.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

In, across, or around fields.

One row is the minimum to define a field boundary or serve as a screen planting.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes.

Methods used will be designed to protect the soil resource from erosion.

Management practices and activities are not to disturb cover during the primary nesting period (May 1 – July 15). Exceptions could be granted when necessary to maintain the health of a plant community. After establishment, management and maintenance activities will generally be restricted to July 15 – August 15. Mowing may be needed during the establishment period to control weeds and grasses.

Plant species used will be adapted to the soil-site conditions. Native plant materials will be used whenever possible. When wildlife habitat is the purpose, only native plant materials will be used.

For species recommendations refer to:

Two or more rows are preferred, especially if being used to provide a snow catch. Stagger the plants between rows for best results.

Use Exclusion (472) will be used to exclude livestock from all plantings for the establishment period. For hedgerows with two or more rows, after the hedgerow is fully established it can serve as a living fence without fence livestock exclusion.

Timing and use of equipment will be appropriate for the site and soil conditions.

Additional Criteria to Provide Wildlife Food and Cover.

Wildlife travel lanes are linear plantings that provide cover and food for wildlife while allowing wildlife to move safely from one area to another, across areas lacking adequate cover.

Plant three or more rows of trees and/or shrubs. Select berry or nut producing species providing fall and winter food sources.

Older established hedgerows for wildlife can be improved by the following practices:

1. Interplant open areas within hedgerows with native vine, shrub, or tree species that provide food and cover for wildlife.
2. If herbaceous strips are desired, periodic mowing or other approved treatment (once every three to five years) will prevent woody plant encroachment. Mow between July 15 and August 15 to benefit ground nesting birds.

Additional Criteria to Provide Screens.

Screen plantings are linear plantings designed to hide unsightly areas from public view or reduce noise.

If only one row is planted, use conifers with low, dense branches to provide benefits throughout the entire year. Multiple row designs allow the addition of plant materials that benefit wildlife and improve the general aesthetics of the area.

Additional Criteria to Serve As Fences.

Fences are linear plantings designed for livestock exclusion.

Plant one or more rows of trees or shrubs. Use material that is dense and that will provide food for wildlife. Plant at closest spacings.

CONSIDERATIONS

Linking fragmented habitats or cover types with corridors may greatly increase the use of an area by wildlife. In general, the wider the corridor the more species will use it. A minimum of 30 feet is needed.

Careful consideration should be given to endangered or threatened species and non-target wildlife species during the planning process.

Establishment of this practice should account for the resulting snowdrift patterns, its impact on soil moisture, and any structures or roads needing protection from blowing and drifting snow.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Site specific plans will be developed based on principles contained in this standard.

When wildlife is a purpose, planners are encouraged to work closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) biologist or area resource conservationist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) private lands biologist, or other wildlife specialist in developing site-specific plans and specifications.

Plans and specifications for establishment and maintenance of this practice shall be prepared for each site. Plans and specifications shall be recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, and narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documents.

These documents are to specify the requirements for installing the practice, such as the kind, amount or quantity of materials to be used, or the timing or sequence of installation activities.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An operation and maintenance plan shall be developed that is consistent with the purposes of this practice; its intended life, and the criteria for its design.

Actions will be carried out to ensure this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use.

This practice will be inspected periodically and restored as needed, to maintain the stated purpose. Additional operation and maintenance requirements will be developed on a site-specific basis to assure performance of the practice as intended.

Management measures must be provided to control invasive species and noxious weeds in order to comply with state noxious weed laws.

Replacement of dead trees and shrubs will be continued until the hedgerow is meeting its intended purpose.